

## Enhancing the participatory process when building a municipal climate change agenda

The voices of local community members and stakeholders play an active role in public processes within the City of Recife. Given the vulnerability of Recife to climate change impacts and the fact a high number of its population is vulnerable to hazards, the city used the GreenClimateCities methodology to enhance its participatory processes as it defined its pathway to a low carbon future through the Urban-LEDS project.

### Summary

In 2012, Recife chose to participate in the Urban-LEDS project in order to create a cross-cutting program that would allow the municipality to foster a low emission development (LED) future that considers social, economic, health, and wellbeing as key factors for successful low carbon development.

The Urban-LEDS project provided the City of Recife the opportunity to apply the GreenClimateCities (GCC) methodology and to integrate it into the metropolitan monitoring system (COMCLIMA). COMCLIMA is used by the Mayor to manage progress across all municipal secretariats within Recife. Making the implementation of the GCC process one of the main priorities of the municipal administration has resulted in the development of an extensive and cross-sectoral legal framework for engaging with climate change.

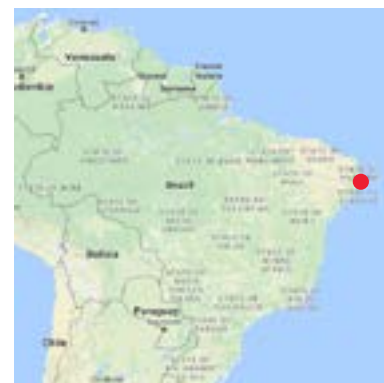
By including local stakeholders at the start of GCC implementation and demonstrating genuine concern for the most vulnerable populations during the policy making process, the City of Recife received considerable support for the implementation of the LED initiatives elaborated in the municipal Climate Action Plan.

### Climate change mitigation in Brazilian cities must be linked to socio-economic development agendas

In the northeast of Brazil, the combination of natural characteristics such as: semi-arid weather in continental areas; droughts; concentrated rain in the winter season; subsistence agriculture; and intense industrial activities in coastal cities all contribute to patterns of internal migration. As a result of this constant displacement of people, impoverished settlements have emerged in urban areas throughout the region.

Over the last two decades, Brazil has made significant advances towards mitigating climate change. However, this agenda has largely been passed-over by municipalities such as Recife, which are facing serious social and economic problems and have been unable to prioritize climate change.

The constant debate surrounding climate change in mainstream Brazilian media has brought its discussion to the forefront in urban centers, and many cities are incentivizing actions to mitigate the effects of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Accordingly, Recife saw participation in the Urban-LEDS project as a valuable opportunity.



### Facts & Figures

**Population / Area**  
1.53 million (2010) / 218 km<sup>2</sup> (2010)

**Municipal Budget**  
USD \$719,150,000 (2015)

**GHG inventory available since:**  
Yes (2015)

The majority of large Brazilian cities, particularly those in the northeast region, are focused on creating policies which alleviate poverty while improving education, health, and housing. Climate change and LED agendas are welcome if they overlap with prioritized sectoral activities that emphasize socio-economic benefit.



Photos 1 & 2: The urban fabric of Recife provides both a cityscape and urban biodiversity

## IPCC report shows urgency of urban vulnerability to climate change

The launch of the 4th IPCC Assessment Report in 2007 provided a glimpse of what cities could face in the future as a result of the impacts of climate change. Projections of the 5th IPCC Assessment Report confirmed an even more dire analysis: that those cities that are more vulnerable to climate change could face impacts much sooner than had been projected.

Recife has been identified as a hotspot by the IPCC, while the State of Ceara, where Fortaleza is the capital, has been facing the worst drought it has seen in 60 years; a drought that is being worsened by the El Niño effect. These factors, combined with frequent debate of climate change in both the local and national media, motivated both cities to participate in Urban-LEDS and implement ICLEI's GreenClimateCities (GCC) methodology.

The National Policy for Climate Change in Brazil, when launched in 2009, did not foresee structured guidelines or incentives for local governments to develop local policies and plans to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change or to acknowledge and bring together such efforts.

When the City of Recife began its work on climate, the GCC process methodology played an important role by providing orientation for local action and was crucial in bringing this

agenda into the core operations of the city administration, within the scope of Urban LEDS Project. The city was one of the pioneers among Brazilian cities to have a range of technical and political instruments to implement an effective and aligned climate framework.

In 2015, the Brazilian INDC - their Intended Nationally Determined Contribution - explicitly recognized the importance of engaging local governments and their efforts in tackling climate change.

The possibility to develop a cross-cutting strategy which addresses both climate change mitigation and economic development appealed to both Recife and Fortaleza (please see also ICLEI Case Study No. 192 on Fortaleza), and has contributed to the rapid uptake of a holistic approach in both cities. The Urban-LEDS project has influenced policy choices in transport, wastewater, urban forestry, land use and occupancy, housing, education, waste management, and energy efficiency.

## Recife in Context

The City of Recife is only one part of an extensive metropolitan region, and this complex urban fabric poses challenges to the municipal administration. As a result, an accurate monitoring system for all actions, problems and results of projects from

all municipal departments has been required.

The last Brazilian Census, conducted in 2010, lists the City of Recife as having a population of 1,537,702, yet the metropolitan region of Recife is home to well over 3,500,000 people spread over 14 municipalities; numbers which reflect considerable urban sprawl. The metropolitan region of Recife is the most populated in the Northeast Region, and is a major shipping and logistics center for Brazil.

## Applying the GCC to Recife's metropolitan monitoring system

The city administration in Recife made implementation of the GCC process a main priority. The result has been the development of an extensive legal framework for engaging with climate change.

Urban-LEDS provided the metropolitan region of Recife the opportunity to implement the GCC methodology into the metropolitan monitoring system (COMCLIMA) used to manage progress across its 14 municipalities. This helped to ease political barriers and diffuse resistance to a new agenda, and went a long way to engaging leaders and promoting a participatory approach to regional policy making.

In addition to the contributions from the respective municipalities, the Recife Climate Action Plan also incorporated representatives of University of Pernambuco, CECPE (an energy company), local NGOs, and professional associations representing industry, architecture, and urbanists. In parallel to this process, the Mayor, through the Secretariat of Environment and the Planning Institute, articulated relevant policies in order to address critical issues that were exposed through the GHG emissions inventory process.

These two levels of articulation strongly impacted the final policies and programs created between 2013 and 2015. The policies which emerged from the Mayor's work on critical issues led to the increased integration between different departments that had not previously cooperated. For example, the Secretariat of Environment and the Secretariat of Infrastructure worked together in the formulation of a Green Roof Law. Additionally, when the preliminary results from the COMCLIMA process were communicated to civil society, feedback that helped to better frame and adapt policies which consider different sectors of society was provided.

## COMCLIMA

In September 2013, Recife's Municipal Committee for Climate Change (COMCLIMA) was officially created (by Decree N° 27.343), as the body responsible for organizing debates, sharing information and creating agendas linked to the formulation of climate change and sustainability policies.

The following secretariats are part of COMCLIMA, as well as representatives of academia and the private sector: Secretariat of Law and Justice, Secretariat of Environment and Sustainability, Secretariat of Planning and Management, Secretariat of Urban Development and Planning, Secretariat of Urban Mobility, Secretariat of Infrastructure and Urban Services, Secretariat of Urban Sanitation, and Secretariat of Housing.



Photo 3: The 4th meeting of the Municipal Committee for Climate Change (COMCLIMA)

The sum of both processes ensured that, throughout the development of the Climate Action Plan, the collaborative process was strengthened and many representatives from civil society were able to tangibly contribute to the long term vision of a low carbon future in Recife.

**Table 1: City and energy profile indicators**

Energy consumption per inhabitant (MJ/hab/year)	2,443,433.735
GHG emissions from municipal operations / as % of overall community emissions	3,120,425.74 tCO <sub>2</sub> e (2012) / 0,3%
% of pop. living in informal settlements	23.2%
% of pop. with access to electricity	99%
% of pop. served by municipal water system	94%
% of pop. served by municipal wastewater drainage system	64%
% of pop. served by municipal solid waste collection system	99%
% of municipal area served by selective collection of waste for recycling	25%
Solid waste generation per inhab. (kg/hab/year)	474,5 kg/hab

### Bringing in the experts

In November 2014 a spatial planning consultancy was formed by UN-Habitat, which sent an ISOCARP consultant to coordinate a workshop with COMCLIMA members. The workshop was attended by over 150 people, and its major result was the re-orientation of urban development priorities based on characteristics of the city, as informed by inputs from different stakeholder groups. The consultancy outlined the main results and presented a proposal for the development for the next 20 years, which included the implementation of specific areas of low carbon development (ZEDUBE) as defined by a review of the Recife Master Plan.

### Creating a legal climate change framework

The historical context of active public participation in policy making in Recife was taken into account at the beginning of GCC implementation process. Accordingly, one of the first activities was to take the perspectives of the private sector, academia, and civil society into account.

Four months after the initial meeting of the Municipal Climate Change Committee, COMCLIMA was officially created by decree and a work plan for the first year of the Urban-LEDS project was created. This calendar outlined the development of the city's first GHG emissions inventory and the creation of a Climate Action Plan.

At the first workshop concerned with the elaboration of the GHG inventory, COMCLIMA appointed a specific working group to coordinate the data collection process and serve as the point-of-contact for explanations about the information that had been gathered during debates with local civil society associations. This working group included civil servants from the Secretariats of Transport, Environment, Services and Maintenance, as well as representatives from industry, CECPE, and the wastewater department.

The participation of civil society in this process ensured that the results of the GHG emission inventory was appropriately scrutinized by the COMCLIMA working group, as it would have to be discussed and debated with the local community. This focused analysis, further informed by perspectives from the local community, formed a clear perception of the most significant local drivers of GHG emissions: lack of an effective public transport system; poor information on domestic waste management and generation; and sizeable energy consumption in commercial and residential buildings.

### Results

**The inclusion of local society at the start of GCC implementation was essential to disseminating the theme of climate change to all sectors of the local community,** as it had previously not been discussed at length by the Municipal Government. By showing genuine concern about the most vulnerable population during the policy making process, the City of Recife guaranteed the support from stakeholders that would be needed to implement actions included in the municipal Climate Action



Plan, such as the extension of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) System to impoverished boroughs, enforcement of the Green Roof Law within large enterprise, and the launch of the Green Building Certificate.

Additionally, **bringing the local community into the GCC process turned climate change into a popular agenda**, as the population soon realized the hazards and impacts that Recife could face over the coming years. An effective communication channel was developed in order to translate the results of milestones, such as the GHG inventory and Climate Action Plan, from technical and procedural lexicon into digestible, colloquial language.

The extensive process of **including influential actors into all stages of policy making also positively translated to the effective use of public equipment** as outlined in the Climate Action Plan by local community actors. This equipment included, among other initiatives, the Econucleos (Centres for Environmental and Climate Education), the Shared Electric Car Scheme, the implementation of cycle paths along Capibaribe River (projeto Parque Capibaribe), and the further development of the Botanical Garden.

**The integration of political leadership with civil society also helped the Municipal Council to approve** Law nº 18.112/2015, also known as the Green Roof Law. The Green Roof Law demands that all residential or commercial building that has a roof over 400 squared meters/or is greater than four stories must have its roof covered by vegetation. After the success of working together with civil society to ensure the support needed to approve the Green Roof Law, the committee followed consultations to set the guidelines of the Green Building Certification Scheme, and involved as many stakeholders as possible at all stages. The final draft for the Scheme is currently under review by civil society representatives, but is scheduled to be launched by June 2016.

Another product of interaction with the GCC methodology was that all actors involved since the beginning of the project, as well as all those who began participation throughout the process, were capable of contributing to recommended GHG emissions reduction target. For this, as before, the Mayor, members of COMCLIMA, as well as other political leaders and all relevant departments, were consulted and were able to provide input towards establishing baseline indicators, forecasted rates of economic growth, and the GHG emissions scenarios that should be considered and reviewed in order to address a flexible GHG emissions reduction target.

Since the start of the Urban-LEDS project, Recife has participated in 3 COPs (Conferences of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) advocating for the recognition of cities and local government climate actions, turning the Mayor into a regional reference in this agenda.

## Lessons Learned

- **Shaping the implementation of the GCC requires considering existing priorities and local issues.** This awareness was crucial to avoiding political conflicts and establishing the transversal priorities of the climate agenda. When other departments realized that Urban-LEDS could leverage attention and resources to



Photo 4: Mayor Geraldo Julio, the Secretary for the Environment and ICLEI South American Secretariat's Strategy and Policy Manager at the launch of solar panels installed as part of the Urban-LEDS project

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departmental initiatives, implementation of the GCC took off, both technically and politically.

- **Engaging leaders from all sectors was the main factor in securing political, technical and community buy-in.** During the GCC process, the engagement of the Mayor proved to be essential to convincing other political leaders to contribute to the GCC process. The effects of strong political leadership could also be seen in the actions of various departments, who were able to articulate the Urban-LEDS agenda with technicians and other strategic stakeholders.
- **Civil servants and civil society representatives played a key role in enriching the deliverables of each step of the GCC,** and in bringing relevant information to the entire process, as well as spreading messages about the relevance of Urban-LEDS across the whole community.

Learning from peers and listening to the local community contributed to the creation of laws and programs that reflected Recife's actual context. Furthermore, building partnerships with two other Urban-LEDS cities, Belo Horizonte and Copenhagen, resulted in two important legal milestones: the Green Building Code Certificate and the Green Roof Law. The challenges, mistakes and successes previously faced by Belo Horizonte and Copenhagen helped Recife to avoid potential obstacles and adapt a route to success.

## Replication

Certain measures, actors, and policies can help lead to successful application of the GCC in any city. These include chief political figures in the city becoming champions of the project, the inclusion of civil society, and the development of effective communication channels.

## Costs and Funding

Through the Urban-LEDS project implemented in by ICLEI and UN-Habitat, and funded by the European Commission, funding was made available for training, capacity building, and the dissemination of documented information, with the overall aim of making Recife a "Model City".

## Further Reading

<http://urbanleds.iclei.org/index.php?id=234>

<http://www.iclei.org/details/article/municipal-council-of-recife-approves-green-roofs-law.html>



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